What the War Meant to Women

BY

DR. ANNA HOWARD SHAW

THE LATE DR. ANNA HOWARD SHAW

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This appeal for support of the League of Nations Covenant is Dr. Shaw's last message to the women of the country, to whose service she devoted her life and by whom she was singularly revered. The revised manuscript was received from Dr. Shaw the day before her death.

Foreword

The correction of the manuscript of this address, received at the office of the League to Enforce Peace the day before Dr. Shaw's death, was her last public service. The address has been delivered in a series of conventions held in May, and ordinarily followed an analysis of the Paris Covenant by ex-President Taft or President Lowell of Harvard University,—a fact that explains the allusion near its end.

When Dr. Shaw was taken ill with pneumonia during the journey, she felt that she might not recover. Knowing that the cause of suffrage, to which she had devoted forty years of her life, had triumphed, she declared repeatedly that now she would rather die in serving the cause of the League of Nations than any other. When she grew better and it seemed that she would recover, she cancelled speaking engagements for the early summer in order to regain her strength for the ratification campaign that would follow the President's return from France and the laying of the text of the treaty before the Senate.

Her relapse and sudden death on July second prevented the carrying out of this purpose. But the address in which Dr. Shaw embodied her message on this subject is herewith presented to the women of the nation, in whose behalf it was written, with the request that, by helping in its distribution and by making their voices heard in the Senate Chamber in behalf of the League of Nations for which Dr. Shaw pleaded so earnestly, they will make her influence far-reaching in the coming debate.

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Chairman, Woman's Committee, Council of National Defense.

What are we women to do in this matter of a League of Nations? What part are we to play in it?

The time was when women were not considered as having any part in the concerns of Government. When I was a little girl a woman could not make a will, she could not make a deed or transact any legal business without the consent of somebody else; that is, if she were married.

In Philadelphia, the Woman's New Century Club decided to build a club house and, after they secured the plans and had everything all ready and they undertook to make a contract with the builders, they were informed that they could not contract with them because they were married women and could not contract. But, as these disabilities were removed and they were enabled to contract, women arose to their sovereignty. It may not be a super-sovereignty, such as our Senate seeks to guard us from, but it is a kind of sovereignty which is very comfortable when you want to make a contract.

Because of this newly found power women, more than men, understand the dignity that comes to a great nation when it has the power to use its will in deciding what it will and what it will not do, and the ability under that will to make such contracts with other peoples that it will bind itself to recognize in them the same obligations and the same rights which it claims for itself.

Women never had such an opportunity in the world's affairs before as we had during the war just closed. At the beginning of the war very little attention was paid to the women but gradually, as the man power began to leave for the front, and as the greater need for

munitions and other necessary equipment of war demanded larger bodies of people in the service of the Government, more and larger demands were made upon women, until it came to such a pass that it is declared by every nation which has been at war that the war could never have been won if it had not been for the work of the women.

Women's War Work

And so through this cooperative service of the men and women we have been able to reach this peace which now is so very near and which we trust the Senate of the United States will not retard, as no other nation save Germany has any desire to do so.

During the war women were called upon to serve and the response was universal. We women in America neither sacrificed nor served as did the women of the other countries. We were not called upon to do it; but as far as the country needed our services, as far as it made demands upon us for any particular line of work, we were ready to do what our government asked.

We have been able to count the men who died in the field. We are told that five million men in this war died in battle and that two million more died from wounds received in battle and that two million more died of disease in the hospitals, making a great total of nine million men who died. But when we speak of the cost of life in this war we enumerate only the men who died. We have made no enumeration of the women. We have made no enumeration of the children. We do not know the vast bodies of women and children who have been slaughtered, women who have been outraged and who today are filling the mad-houses of France and Belgium and Serbia and all the other nations which have been overrun by the armies. We know nothing about the horrible results which have come to the lives of women or of the cost of this war in women as well as its cost in men.

While we were called upon to serve dur-

ing the war, what was it for? Why was it that women responded as they did respond? Why was it that as one woman we came together and said to the Government, "What shall we do?"

Organization, Not Enthusiasm, Needed.

When I was appointed by the President of the United States and the Council of National Defense as Chairman of the Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense, it was not because the women needed to be urged to do patriotic service, it was because women from all over the United States, in organized groups and individually, came with such a demand asking that they might serve that the Government was swamped by this desire; and the Government found it necessary to organize a group of women to direct the war work of women—not because they lacked patriotism but because of their patriotism; they all wanted to serve but they did not know in what way they could best render that service or what the country desired of them.

The Government called the women who organized the Woman's Committee together and they made us the medium in directing all the war work of the women of the United States.

What was the one cry that brought women together? What was the one impulse which drew them, as one woman? It was this!

You remember that when Mr. Wilson was re-elected President of the United States they said it was because of the pacifists and women; that the women of the West elected Mr. Wilson because he had kept us out of the war—that was the cry during the campaign. "He has kept us out of the war," and therefore many people said women were pacifists; and yet, if they had used their intelligence as they should have used it, they would have known that from the beginning of the war, long before our Government entered into it, the women of this nation began to organize. The so-

ciety to which I belonged went to Washington in February prior to our entrance into the war with Germany. We called the women of our whole national organization together; they came by hundreds and we formulated a plan of service. We saw the war was coming and we wanted to be prepared. And after we had made our preparation, deciding what lines of work, as a society, we would undertake, we offered ourselves, our two million women, to the Government and declared that whenever the Government called us we were ready to respond.

That was in February and war was declared in April, and when the Government did call upon us we were ready. I asked the Secretary of War what it was that he expected the woman's committee to do. He said, "We want you to coordinate the women's work of the United States, all the war work of the women, so that they will not duplicate, they will not overlap and they will cooperate in carrying out every requirement of the Government."

Council of National Defense.

That was a tremendous task, because women have been educated through the centuries not to have world vision, not to have a country vision, not to have even a community vision. We have been trained and educated to consider persons first and then little groups of persons afterwards—first, myself and my family—and then it comes "my church," then "my society" and "my set"—and so it has always been the personal relationship which has been developed in women until they were not able to forget their own narrow interests. But on the first call sent out by our Committee to the women of the country seventy-five presidents of the largest organizations in the United States came to Washington and we formed a group called the Advisory Committee of the Woman's Committee, Council of National Defense, all of these seventy-five societies agreeing to give up their individual, identical work, their individual service, as they had been expecting

to perform it, and to come together and to unite to carry out any plan of united service which the Government might demand, while still retaining their identity.

What led those women to do this? What led them to forget the training of the past, and combine for one solid purpose?

When the Secretary of War told me that he wanted us not only to get the women to cooperate and prevent overlapping, etc., he said, "We want them to cooperate," and when the Secretary said that he smiled. I knew what was in the back of his head. He thought it would be impossible to get women to cooperate, and, being always ready to defend women—not, as it has been said, right or wrong, but being ready to defend them because I believed them to be in the right, I said to him, "Mr. Secretary, you seem to think that the women will not cooperate; that is because you have been dealing with men. If you will give them an object big enough and put back of them an incentive strong enough you will find that the women of this country will cooperate, Mr. Secretary." Now I frankly confess I did not quite believe what I said. I was bluffing a little bit but I was not going to have the Secretary think we could not cooperate, no matter what I thought about it.

To the honor of the women of this Nation, let it be said that from the beginning of the war to the end of it they maintained their pledge of cooperation.

"War to End War."

Men told us that, if we made a conquered peace, if we subdued militarism and the militarist spirit which Germany was inciting not only in its own country, but in the countries of the world, it would be conquered forever. "This is the war to end war."

It was that thought which brought women together, "This is a war to end war," and women must play their part in helping to end war forever.

We know that men are ready to die in war; but there are a great many things

harder than to die. Everybody must die sometime and it does not make so much difference perhaps as to the number of days we live as it does to the manner in which we live the days we *do* live. There are some things that are worth a great deal more than life, and one thing which was worth more than life to the men who went out and laid down their lives for their countries was not to leave a dishonored nation, a nation unworthy of the civilization of our time, a nation which had no heart to feel and no understanding to realize the conditions of intimate association between nation and nation and the obligation which one nation has to care for and sympathize with another.

Having grasped this idea of democracy, this idea of the oneness of the human family, we declared that we would give everything that we had and sacrifice everything that we had in the interests of ending war forever. So our women toiled and sacrificed and saved and toiled again, until the war ended.

Not Ended on Field of Battle.

Now, whether we agree with every part of that Peace Treaty or not, no matter whether we agree with everything there is in the League of Nations or not, the question remains that now with the Germans, our opponents, defeated on the field of battle, is that the way to end war forever, merely to defeat them on the field of battle? Is there not something to be done afterwards? Every one knows that no war is ended on the battlefield. The last word in any war is not spoken on the battlefield. The last word in war is spoken in the halls where the people meet together to decide what shall be the result of the war, what shall be the penalties of the war, and how peace shall be made.

If President Wilson were to stand before us today and tell us even a part of what he knows that we do not know, we would be the most astonished people in all the world. The Peace Commission with all the facts before them know; and out of their

knowledge, out of what they understand of the relation of nations to each other, they have given us this League of Nations, as the best solution they could produce, to bring about a just and lasting peace. That is what we women have been working for from the beginning of the war. In a conversation with President Wilson just before he went to Paris, he said, "The most difficult task I have had since the war began, in dealing with foreign nations, has been to convince them that we do not want any material advantage out of this war. They cannot understand it. Never before did any great nation go into a war such as this, with our men and our treasure, and then ask nothing in return. I could hardly make them believe that we were perfectly willing to come out with empty hands; and yet," he said, "they are beginning to understand that, because our men over there on the battlefield have shown them their disinterestedness, and they are able to feel that if we can send men to die in this disinterested way, those of us who are at home have perhaps the same spirit, and so they are beginning to trust us a little more than they did in the beginning."

What Women Want Out of War.

While Mr. Wilson said we want nothing out of the war, I said in my own heart—It may be that we want nothing material out of the war, but, oh, we want the biggest thing out of this war that has ever come to the world. We want Peace now and Peace forever.

If we cannot get that peace out of this war, what hope is there that it will ever come to humanity? Was there ever such a chance offered to the world before? Was there ever a time when the peoples of all nations looked towards America as they are looking today, because of our unselfishness in our dealings with them during the war?

We have not always been unselfish, but we have been in this war. Because of this they are looking to us, with hope. There were never such devastated countries as there are now over there where great na-

tions were destroyed. The war is over as far as the fighting is concerned, but it is only begun as far as the life of the people is concerned. They have got to come back, to build up a new life and a new hope and a new home.

What would there be of inspiration to these people to come back to their ruined homes and build up again their cities, if, within a few years, the same thing could be repeated and homes destroyed and cities devastated, the people outraged and made slaves as they have been? What hope would there be to these people? Why, men and women, they are looking to us as the hope of the world. And whenever I look on our flag, whenever I look on those stars on their field of blue and those stripes of red and white, I say to myself, "I do not wonder that when that flag went over the trenches and surmounted the barriers, the people of the world took heart of hope."

Security for the Future.

It was then that they began to feel they could unite with us in some sort of security for the future. And that flag means so much to me. I never look on its stars but that I see in every star the hope that must stir the peoples of the old world when they think of us and the power we have of helping to lead them up to a place where they may hope for their children and for their children's children the things that have not come to them.

It is because we stand in such a position before the world that we cannot afford to quibble. We cannot even for political advantage, we cannot afford because of personal hatred, to take from them one hour of hope, one ray of light. And yet, a few weeks ago, I was in the Capitol at Washington, talking to one of the Senators. I tried to talk to him upon another subject; he could not talk upon that subject, he was so full of having been slighted, so full of not having been consulted, so full of not having been recognized as a great and important and dignified member of that dignified body. When Senators

have to tell how dignified they are in order for people to find it out, it is about time they rested upon something else because that is a very shaky kind of dignity. This Senator's attack was not upon the League of Nations at all. It was all because something was not done which he thought ought to have been done. There is no doubt that a great many things have not been done which all of us think ought to have been done. There is not one of us who does not think he can do things better than anybody else. Most of us would like to have been set upon a pedestal and had Mr. Wilson sit down in front of us and ask us our opinion.

But still, notwithstanding that, we are perfectly willing to accept what has been evolved by those men who have all the facts before them, as the best thing which can be done now.

I do not think the League of Nations is perfect. I say that because everybody else says it. I really do not know why it is not perfect. And it is not because I have not read it, for I have read it and re-read it and re-read it. A particular friend of mine, after we had been reading it aloud together, said to me, "Now what could you put into it that is not there?" And I said, "The thing that bothers me is how they found so many things to put into it that *are* there."

Treaty a Marvelous Document.

The Treaty of Peace which has been submitted to the Germans I think is the most marvelous document in the world, and I have been wondering how many hundred men it took to think up all the demands they put into that peace pact. Congress says the League Covenant has delayed peace. Congress has been feeling fearfully because of that. The Senators have been blaming Mr. Wilson because he delayed peace because of the League of Nations, and all the time that the Peace Conference has been working up this marvelous peace pact on this League of Nations and investigating the conditions of all Europe in order

to make it a pact that is fair and just, Congress was not able to pass an appropriation bill, so we have been running into debt because we have no money to pay bills. If Congress had been attending to its job, Mr. Wilson would not have been fretted quite so much in Paris and perhaps his job would have been ended long ago.

This is the thing we are facing in this country. It is a sort of quibble among a group of men, for what?

One, however, is honest enough in his dishonesty—Mr. Reed, who does not know what honor is and never did—he has been honest enough at least to say that he does not want any League of Nations at all. There are a lot of other people who want this nation to go alone in this world. But the time has gone by when any country can stand alone. The time has gone by when a country no more than an individual can live to itself or die to itself.

Heaven or Hell—Which?

We have come to the place now where we can fly in a day from this country to any other country on the earth, almost, and we have become so closely interallied that national interests merge the one with the other, in such a manner that we cannot go alone. We must look facts in the face. All humanity is one. The world is one. And no nation can suffer unless all nations suffer. No nation can prosper without all nations prospering. We have got to take facts as they are and we have got to find out the best thing we can have. The best thing that has been given us and the only thing we have before us is this League of Nations. We have no other League of Nations. We have only this one. We must take this one or no one can tell what will come. We have no midway point. We have no purgatory. We have to choose either Heaven or Hell. We must take it or we must reject it.

Suppose the Senate of the United States amends that League of Nations, so as to make it radically different. What will happen? What is happening to us all over the

country today? You and I have felt the slump that has come to our national life since the armistice. We have felt it in business; we have felt it in the morale of the people; it is everywhere apparent. We are simply waiting. Waiting for what? Waiting for that peace which will give to us a basis upon which we can start our new life, and we will not be able to recover unless we do have something of that sort to bring us back again to the high plane upon which we stood during the war. To stand where we stood before the war will not do. We must have an incentive before us, an incentive for the intellectual and moral and industrial advancement of the people; the incentive must be universal in its application and we are waiting for it—waiting until this League of Nations Treaty of Peace has been signed.

If the Senate Amends.

Suppose the Senate rejects the League in its present form and makes amendments, as it says it has a right to do, but as some distinguished lawyers think it has not—suppose they do that. What will happen? The thing that will happen is that they will have to take it back again and deliver it to thirty-one different nations to see if they will ratify these amendments which our Senate has made. It will have to go to Germany as well as the other nations to see whether Germany will accept it. And it may not be accepted. And then some other nation, seeing that we have distinguished ourselves by making amendments and changes, will want to make changes and amendments and it will have to come back, and then we will make some more, and then it will go back and forth and Heaven alone knows when Peace will come or anything else to give us a start in the upward way.

Suppose we do not sign the Peace Treaty as it is. Suppose the Senate of the United States refuses to sign it with the League of Nations Covenant in it as it is now, but amends the League of Nations provision so that it is of no value whatever,

what will happen? We are told by the press that there is one clause in that Treaty which declares that if any three nations sign the Treaty with Germany as it stands, then they may enter into international relations with Germany. They may open up trade and start to do business with Germany just the same as if all the other nations had signed it.

Suppose Japan and France and Great Britain and Italy should sign that pact and we should refuse to do it; what would happen? They would be at peace, and we would be at war with Germany. That is what would happen. We have not signed the Peace Treaty and we are still at war. They would be in a state of peace while we, isolated, would be standing alone.

Another Big Job for Women.

Women, what have you been doing the last few weeks? You have been going from house to house raising the Victory Loan. I think one of the greatest jobs that women have done for the country has been the Liberty Loan. The country came to you in the beginning to send your boys across the seas; what was the cry! Send them provisions! Send them munitions! That was the cry. What have you been doing the last three or four weeks? You have been going out from house to house in the same old way, as women always do. Men do not. They think it is easy work. I have been in a great many political campaigns for reform, reform mayors and other people, and when the reform group get together and decide what they want to do they always say that the women are too feeble to vote for the reform mayor but they are not too feeble to do the work which is assigned to them, which is to go from house to house and do the canvassing and raise the funds. That is all they ask us to do.

Now it is the habit of men to lay that kind of house to house canvassing on women. In the Liberty Loan campaigns they told us, "You must not touch these big

sums; we will stand behind our counter or desk and when a man wants ten thousand dollars or a hundred thousand or a million dollars worth of bonds we will take the subscription, because they are so big you could not understand it. You may go from house to house; you may set your booths on the corner; you may take a fifty dollar subscription or a hundred dollar subscription." And the women have done it in every Liberty Loan drive.

I was in a city where, in the last campaign, in that kind of hard drudgery women raised fifty per cent. of the entire quota, just the women, going from house to house, and in all our cities and states they have done their full share and have done it splendidly.

What was the cry this time? Was it "Send the men across the sea," as it was in the beginning? Quite different. One sign I saw all over New York, all over Pennsylvania, all over Boston—"If you could sell bonds to send the boys across, can't you sell more bonds to bring the boys home?" That was the cry—**to bring the boys home.** How the boys would be cheered when they knew the men and women of the country were raising money to bring them home.

But if all the other nations except ours sign the Treaty of Peace and accept the League of Nations, and we still remain at war with Germany, are we going to bring the boys home with this money or are we going to keep them over there and provide for them while they are still holding the forts along the Rhine?

Bugaboo Words.

But our Senate is talking, talking! We women and men—are so afraid of words. If they are unfamiliar enough they scare us to death. To call a woman strong-minded in my girlhood days was enough to throw her into a spasm, because it meant in that day that she was a little bit inhuman or unhuman; and then women began to discover that there were only two kinds of minds, strong minds and feeble minds, and

they all wanted strong minds, they were not frightened by that word.

Then came the word "suffragist," which used to fill them with terror. By and by they came to understand that the suffrage of the people was the method of registering the will of the people, and then we were not at all afraid of that word because it dignified us.

Then they used the word—"feminist," and a lot of women got frightened for fear they would be called feminists. And when I speak upon the subject in which I am so much interested, the democracy of the country, which includes women, they always hurl at me the word "feminist," and what does that mean? It is woman aspiring to be human, which is not a bad thing at all.

We are so afraid of words, and the Congress of the United States, knowing our fear of words, invented the word "super-sovereignty." That is a wonderful word—"super-sovereignty." There is only one thing that they have produced that is new in their arguments against this League of Nations, that has not been used against the enfranchisement of women for the last forty years; and that is the Monroe Doctrine—that I believe has never been used against women's political freedom. When they couldn't do anything else they have always gone back to the fathers. You have heard about the fathers and what the fathers did. Why, the Chinese never worshipped their ancestors so much as Congress worships the fathers, when they haven't any reason to give for their attitude upon any subject.

Then when they have exhausted the fathers they bring out the constitution and they say "it is unconstitutional." Everything is unconstitutional.

The Meaning of a League.

President Lowell, of Harvard, has clearly explained every single idea there is in the League and every purpose of it—simply that we may be able to have some sort of

an organized body by which we may have international cooperation in keeping peace, international cooperation in helping to protect weaker peoples, international cooperation in providing a certain uniformity of law in the protection of the laboring people of the world, international cooperation to prevent the spread of disease and other evils. There is little for me to say on that last proposition. When influenza was sweeping over the country didn't we wish that we had some kind of an international health bureau by which we could have kept that disease out? And that is only the beginning of many diseases which will sweep the world as a result of the war, of the impoverished condition of Europe, and the unhealthful conditions of living forced upon the soldiers in the trenches.

And from those evils come back to us the lesson we must learn, that the "sins of the fathers are visited upon the children even to the third and fourth generations." When I read that Peace Pact and I thought how hard it is, how difficult it is, there appeared before me just as if it were written in words of light, "The sins of the fathers shall be visited upon the children unto the third and fourth generation." So Germany's children will bear the burden to the third and fourth generation of the crimes against them and the children of the world will bear the burdens of the obligations which they are compelled to assume because of the sins of the peoples of the world.

We women, the mothers of the race, have given everything, have suffered everything, have sacrificed everything, and we come to you now and say, "The time has come when we will no longer sit quietly by and bear and rear sons to die at the will of a few men. We will not endure it. We will not endure it. We demand either that you shall do something to prevent war or that we shall be permitted to try to do something ourselves."

Could there be any cowardice, could there be any injustice, could there be any wrong, greater than to refuse to hear the voice of a

woman expressing the will of women at the peace table of the world and then for men not to provide a way by which the women of the future shall not be robbed of their sons as the women of the past have been?

To you men we look for support. We look for your support back of your Senators and from this day until the day when the League of Nations is accepted and ratified by the Senate of the United States, it should be the duty of every man and every woman to see to it that the Senators from their state know the will of the people; that they know that the people will that something shall be done, even though not perfect; that there shall be a beginning, from which we shall construct something more perfect by and by; that the will of the people is that this League shall be accepted, and that if, in the Senate of the United States, there are men so blinded by partisan desire for present advantage, so blinded by personal pique and narrowness of vision, that they cannot see the large problems which involve the nations of the world; then the people of the States must see to it that other men sit in the seats of the highest.

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